

REMARKS

This Response amends the claims in a manner that is believed to place the case in condition for allowance. Claims 2-6, 8, 10-14 and 16-18 are pending in the present application. Independent claims 1, 7, 9 and 15 are canceled and claims 2-4, 10-12 and 17 are amended in this response. Dependent claims 3 and 11 are amended into independent form including the content from canceled independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, and independent claim 17 is amended similarly to include the allowable subject matter of claims 3 and 11. Claims 2 and 4 are amended to change their dependency to claim 3. Claims 10 and 12 are amended to change their dependency to claim 11. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

I. Telephone Interview

Applicants thank Examiner John M. Winter for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the April 6, 2005 telephone interview. During the interview, Applicants' representative discussed the distinctions between the present invention and the *Colosso* and *Hecksel* references.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action states that claims 8, 16, and 18 are allowable over the prior art of record and claims 3 and 11 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for identifying this allowable subject matter. Claims 3 and 11 are amended as indicated and are now in condition for allowance.

Additionally, independent claim 17 is amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 3 and 11 and therefore, is also now in condition for allowance. Further, dependent claims 2, 4-6, 10, 12-14 are now dependent on claims 3 and 11, respectively. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103. Alleged Obviousness Based on *Colosso*, *Hecksel* and *Frison*

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-10, 12-14, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Colosso* (U.S. Patent 6,169,976 B1) in view of *Hecksel et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,151,707), and further in view of *Frison et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,049,789). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 9 are canceled. Dependent claims 3 and 11 contain allowable subject matter and are amended into independent form including the content from canceled independent claims 1 and 9, respectively. Independent claim 17 is amended similarly to include the allowable subject matter, as recited in claims 3 and 11. Thus, claim 17 is now in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 2, 4, 10 and 12 are amended to change their dependency to claims 3 and 11, respectively. Thus, claims 2, 4-6, 10 and 12-14 are now in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 3 and 11. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-10, 12-14, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

IV. 35 U.S.C. § 103. Alleged Obviousness Based on *Colosso*

The Office Action rejects claims 7, 15 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over *Colosso* (U.S. Patent 6,169,976 B1). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

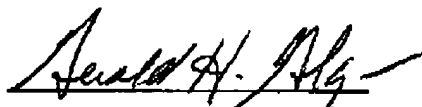
The Office Action states that claim 18 is allowable over the prior art of record. Independent claims 7 and 15 are canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7, 15 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

V. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the cited references and is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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